

school history and the second time in this decade.

The University of Minnesota Duluth women's ice hockey Bulldogs—the Senator—earned their fourth championship in the past 8 years. It's good to see you again.

The University of Oklahoma men's gymnastics upset the top seed to win their fifth national title in the past 7 years.

And the Syracuse men's lacrosse team claimed their 10th national championship, which sets a new NCAA lacrosse record.

We honor you all, and we welcome you to the White House. And as importantly, we thank you for your contributions to the communities in which you live. These athletes have volunteered at food banks during holidays. They have visited schools to inspire children with disabilities. They've encouraged literacy and good health. They've raised money to fight cancer. What I'm telling you are—is, they're great athletes and good citizens. And for that, our country is grateful.

We're glad that you're here. We congratulate you and your families and your schools for your achievements. We ask for God's blessings on you and on our country. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:08 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Agriculture Edward T. Schafer; Senator Gordon H. Smith of Oregon; Senators Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson of Georgia; Representative Charles W. Dent of Pennsylvania; and Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota.

Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Western Balkans

June 24, 2008

On June 26, 2001, by Executive Order 13219, I declared a national emergency with respect to the Western Balkans pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701–1706) to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States constituted by the actions of persons engaged in, or assisting, sponsoring, or supporting (i) extremist violence in the

Republic of Macedonia and elsewhere in the Western Balkans region, or (ii) acts obstructing implementation of the Dayton Accords in Bosnia or United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999, in Kosovo. I subsequently amended that order in Executive Order 13304 of May 28, 2003.

Because the actions of persons threatening the peace and international stabilization efforts in the Western Balkans continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States, the national emergency declared on June 26, 2001, and the measures adopted on that date and thereafter to deal with that emergency, must continue in effect beyond June 26, 2008. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing for 1 year the national emergency with respect to the Western Balkans.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

George W. Bush

The White House,
June 24, 2008.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 1:07 p.m., June 24, 2008]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on June 25.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Western Balkans

June 24, 2008

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal*

Register for publication stating that the Western Balkans emergency is to continue in effect beyond June 26, 2008.

The crisis constituted by the actions of persons engaged in, or assisting, sponsoring, or supporting (i) extremist violence in the Republic of Macedonia and elsewhere in the Western Balkans region, or (ii) acts obstructing implementation of the Dayton Accords in Bosnia or United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999, in Kosovo, that led to the declaration of a national emergency on June 26, 2001, in Executive Order 13219 and to Executive Order 13304 of May 28, 2003, has not been resolved. The acts of extremist violence and obstructionist activity outlined in Executive Order 13219, as amended, are hostile to U.S. interests and pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to the Western Balkans and maintain in force the comprehensive sanctions to respond to this threat.

George W. Bush

The White House,
June 24, 2008.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Jalal Talabani of Iraq

June 25, 2008

President Bush. It's been my honor to welcome a friend, President Talabani, back to the Oval Office. He is the President of a free Iraq. He is a man who's been on the frontlines of helping to unify Iraq and to help Iraq recover from a brutal regime—that of Saddam Hussein.

I complimented the President on the progress that the Government has made. I complimented the President on the fact that as security has improved, he and his fellow officials are reaching out to all aspects of society to help people realize the blessings of a free life.

There's still a lot of work to be done; we recognize that. We talked of a variety of subjects. We talked about a strategic framework agreement that suits the Iraqi Government.

We talked about elections and different laws that have been passed. I did compliment the President on working hard to see to it that the legislative session this year has been very successful. We talked about the fact that the economy's improving and that the attitude of the people there has improved immeasurably over the years.

And so I welcome you here. I'm proud of what you've done, and I thank you for the tough decisions, so that the people of a free Iraq can realize hopes and dreams. Welcome.

President Talabani. Well, I am proud to have the honor of meeting President George Bush, whom we consider the liberator of Iraq from the worst kind of dictatorship, as a great friend of Iraqi people. I am grateful for what he said about me. But I agree with him that we are going to work together for having this agreement—security agreement between United States and Iraq and also to continue our cooperation in our struggle against terrorism, for promotion of democracy in Iraq and Middle East.

We are proud to have such a good friends here in this great country. And I think we can—I can say that we can pass, this year, two important laws, oil and election. And we are now going to reunite our Government by bringing Tawafuq also to the—I mean, Sunni representatives, to the Iraqi national unity Government headed by our Prime Minister, Nuri Maliki.

I also briefed our good friend about the achievements which Iraq had done in struggle against terrorism and, again, militias, who were making troubles for Iraq and threatening civil war. Now I can say that Iraq—big part of Iraq is stable and is secured and liberated from the danger of terrorism and militia.

Yes, some places still—there are some groups that remain here and there, but I think big achievement we have done this year with the support of the United States Army and Government and with the friendly advices from President Bush. I can say that we are proud to achieved good successes in Iraq. And our economy is growing.

We have also—big steps forward for national reconciliation. We improved our relation with our neighbors, with Turkey, with